



## DEPLOYABLE LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER: *CLASSROOM ON THE MOVE*

**T**he Deployable Learning Resource Center (DLRC) about to be fielded for a limited user test (LUT) by the Marine Corps Distance Learning Center (DLC), is designed to allow Marines to continue their education and training exercises while away from their home base.

Marines will have access to hundreds of hours of interactive training covering a wide variety of subjects from military to technology and personal development skills.

"From a technical perspective, it is already a success," said Major James Munroe, Infrastructure/S-6A, Distance Learning Center, Training and Education Command. "The system works well. The real test, however, will be when Marines use it."

The buzz surrounding the DLRC is

***WITH LIMITED USER TESTS ANTICIPATED IN JANUARY 2003, TRAINING AND EDUCATION COMMAND FORESEE THIS VENTURE WILL PROVIDE MARINES WITH MORE DISTANCE LEARNING AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES DURING DEPLOYMENT. BY SYLVIE ELLEN, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR***

concentrated on its innovative use of interactive training capabilities and its ability to involve Marines in training at a different level.

"The DLRC concept of deployment can be summarized this way," said Major Tom Wright, DLC assistant operations officer. "Prior to a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) scheduled deployment, the commanding officer determines how many DLRC suites are needed for distribution to subordinate commanders in order to

satisfy unit training and education requirements—for example, one suite per ship. The server will be configured with the Learning Management System (LMS), a catalog of electronic courses and all personnel information—it's all pre-loaded."

Deployed Marines are the true beneficiaries of this distance learning initiative. "We are providing a more interactive and engaging means of conducting training and education, some which is mandatory

and some of which is optional, but extremely beneficial,” Munroe said. “And if Marines like the DLRC and use it regularly, then it will become standard operating procedure while deployed and then I think we can say it is a success.”

Marines are provided with anytime/anywhere access to electronic training products as well as many formal courses sponsored by Marine Corps schools. They have the opportunity to improve their proficiency and work toward promotion points while deployed. To further enhance efficiency, online testing through DLRC reduces the time it takes for deployed Marines to receive formal credit for Marine Corps Institute courses.

The design of the DLRC is based upon government-developed specifications, written to meet the unique environment of deployed Marine Corps units that routinely deploy to shipboard and tactical field environments.

All of the DLRC components are commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) hardware and software that complies with current DoD IT guidelines.

A DLRC is designed as a modular system to accommodate extremely limited space constraints posed by the shipboard environment.

Each deployable suite consists of one server and 20 client workstations packaged in five, man-portable, wheeled transit cases for protection.

One case holds a server that hosts the

LMS, a server that is responsible for student administration. The dimensions of the server case are approximately 12 inches by 20 inches by 32 inches and weighs 97 pounds. It holds all courseware and a student-tracking database that contains information on all Marines on current deployment.

Each of the four remaining cases contains five multimedia laptop computers, a router and peripherals. Each laptop and peripheral case is about 14 inches by 19 inches by 24 inches and weighs 83 pounds. Usually, the system is installed with the server case connected from a server room. Small clusters of laptops (five or fewer) connect from available network wall plugs where space and LAN drops are available.

Although a full suite consists of the server and 20 notebook computers, the shipboard environment can rarely accommodate all the laptops in one “classroom” space.

The system, however, is designed to be flexible and set up in many environments including hangers, barracks, temporary buildings or tents—any location with power. On average, the system set up takes an hour.

“When the DLRC is aboard ship and connected, it will have the ability to ‘reach-back’ and synchronize with the Master Learning Management System (LMS) in the DL Networks Operations Center (DLNOC) located at the Naval Air Weapons Center, Aircraft Division (NAWC-AD) in St.



**The DLRC packed (above) and unpacked (below). At left, Marines try out their new laptops. Photos courtesy of Marine Corp System Command.**



Inigoes, MD,” Wright said. “This is accomplished using ship-to-shore communications, taking advantage of allowable satellite bandwidth when it becomes available.”

According to Wright, the DLRC has completed IT-21 testing with SPAWAR for USN shipboard interoperability and the prototype DLRC is scheduled to deploy with a MEU for the purpose of conducting a LUT with Marines in January 2003.

“Following this LUT, a fielding plan will be developed, with distribution planned for approximately 54 DLRC suites to major Marine bases and stations during FY03 and FY04,” said Wright. “This will allow the MEF and MEU commanders the flexibility to subcustody and deploy with the right mix of DLRC suites based on their requirements and mix of ships, offering Marines a tremendous opportunity to complete required and elective training and education through a robust suite of over 800 web-based and computer-based courses, including many Marine-specific courses, while forward deployed around the globe.”

Wright said, “The Deployable Learning Resource Center (DLRC) is one of the most exciting training and education opportunities we plan to field to our deployed Marines.” ★

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